Passing off Financial benefits arising out of over pricing of rice to the farmers

2502. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the FCI has not passed on financial benefits arising out of over pricing of rice to the farmers; and

(b) the steps proposed to ensure compliance with fair trade practices by FCI?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The price at which paddy is purchased from the formers, *i.e.* Minimum Support Price (MSP) as well as the price at which rice is accepted from the millers are fixed by the Government.

Similarly, the Central Issue Prices (CIP) of foodgrains distributed through Public Distribution System are also fixed by the Government. CIP is fixed well below the economic cost and no profit is earned by FCI.

FCI is not a commercial organisation with profit as an objective, and all of its operations are subsidised by the Government. FCI is an undertaking of Government of India which aims at rendering service to farmers and consumers purely as a service organisation. Since the element of profit motive is absent, the question of not following fair trade practices does not arise.

Proposal to enhance the wage ceiling of social insurance coverage under the ESI scheme

2503. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND:
DR. RANBIR SINGH:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enhance the wage ceiling for social insurance coverage under ESI Scheme and the rate of contribution; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with background and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) The Labour Ministers' Conference of major States and the ESIC have recommended enhancement of the wage ceiling for coverage under the ESI Scheme from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 6500/- per month and also for enhancement of rate of contribution of the employers and the employees from 4% to 4.75% and from 1.50% to 1.75% of the monthly wage respectively. Accordingly, a notification to carry out necessary amendments in the ESI (Central) Rules, 1950 has since been issued inviting objections/suggestions of all concerned.

Operations of captive power plants in Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro

2504. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the captive power plants in Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro are being operated at below capacity because of the power purchase agreement signed long back between these plants and DVC;

(b) if so, the steps taken to restore the position of the full capacity utilisation of captive power plants in these industries; and

(c) if not, the figure of capacity utilisation in those plants since 1994?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Only Captive Power Plant (CPP) of Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP) is running below capacity due to minimum guaranteed energy charge clause in power supply agreement of DSP with DVC.

Capacity utilisation of Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro Steel Plants since 1993-94 is as under:—